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ABSTRACT

Four tests, the Oral Placement Test, and Oral Production Test Levels I, II and III are designed to measure auditory comprehension, oral production, the ability to ask questions and conversational skills. The instruments are appropriate for use in adult basic education programs. The placement test can be used to place students at various class levels solely on the basis of oral language abilities. The oral production tests can be used to determine whether a student has mastered the oral language skills in a level and is ready to proceed to the next level. The achievement tests can be used diagnostically if the student's errors are noted on his test as it is scored. The test can be administered in 5 to 10 minutes. Copies of the tests, scoring keys, and directions for administering are provided. No technical data is reported. (NE)

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ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE TESTS

The Bureau of Basic Continuing Education and local ABE administrators, supervisors and teachers have long felt the need for tests to measure growth in oral communication skills.

In 1970 the Yonkers Adult Basic Education Program was given a special project grant by the Bureau to develop a more systematic ESL curriculum, an oral testing program and an ESL Learning Laboratory.

The enclosed tests were developed under that special project. The content and sequence of the tests follows that of the Orientation in American English series published by the Institute of Modern Languages. This assured that the tests at least had content validity. Their validity in programs using other textual series has not yet been determined.

The tests at different levels measure Auditory Comprehension, Oral Production, Asking Questions and Free Conversation.

Criteria for passing from one ESL level to the next have been set, though they are subject to change based on further field-testing. These criteria are listed on the following page.

These tests are an integral part of the Yonkers ABE program and may be observed in use there. Special thanks is due to Howard Kirkland who first administered the tests and who has made valuable suggestions for their improvement.

The tests were written by Robert Poczik.

USE OF THE TESTS

How can they be used?

The placement test can be used to place students at various class levels solely on the basis of oral language abilities. Each achievement test can be used to determine whether a student has mastered the oral language skills in a level and is ready to proceed to the next level. The achievement tests can be used for diagnostic purposes if the student's errors are noted on his test as it is scored.

When can they be given?

The placement test can be given upon entry into the program and prior to placement in class. Each achievement test can be given when the students in a class have completed the work assigned for a given class level.

How are they administered?

Each student is tested individually. The placement test takes approximately 5 minutes and each achievement test less than 10 minutes. The student can be told in his native language that he is to respond with a full sentence and not with just a single word. This direction may be repeated later in the test. The tester may check correct responses during the test or use a tape-recorder to record a student's responses and correct the test later.

How are they scored?

If a student indicates in any way that he has understood a question, he is to be given credit for Auditory Comprehension (A. C.). If a student answers with a sentence that is grammatically correct, he is to be given credit for Oral Production (O. P.). For example, if the student answers "My name Carlos" to the question "What's your name?", he should be given credit for Comprehension but not for Production.

How can they be adapted?

Since the tests are based on the Orientation in American English series, they are likely to be inappropriate when other texts are used. Comparable tests could be produced by using the format and substituting questions and answers taken directly from the texts used in your program. The results would be a placement test that could place students in the appropriate text in a text series and achievement tests that could measure completion of segments of a course.

CRITERIA FOR ESL TESTS

	Auditory Comprehension (A.C.)	Oral Production (O.P.)	Conversation	Asking Questions
Oral Placement Test	(See Scoring Key for placement criteria)			
Oral Production Test Level One	31/35	25/32	X	X
Oral Production Test Level Two	15/17	10/16	6/9	X
Oral Production Test Level Three	12/13	10/13	7/9	4/5

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1 = ESL Level 1
2 = ESL Level 2
3 = ESL Level 3
Ex = Exempted from ESL Track

ORAL PLACEMENT TEST
SCORING KEY

Step 1

Auditory Comprehension

Oral Production	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2
3				2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
4					2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
5						2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
6							2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3
7								3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
8									3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
9										3	3	3	3	3	3	3
10											3	3	3	3	3	3
11												3	3	3	Ex	Ex
12													Ex	Ex	Ex	Ex
13														Ex	Ex	Ex
14															Ex	Ex

Step 2

Conversation

Score Derived From Step 1	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
2	1	2	2	2	2	2	3
3	2	2	2	3	3	3	Ex
Ex	2	2	3	3	Ex	Ex	Ex

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Division of Continuing Education
New York State Education Department

(FIRST DRAFT)

ORAL PLACEMENT TEST

Student _____

Date _____

Tester _____

Assigned to _____

Score:

Auditory Comprehension /15

Oral Production /14

Conversation /9

☐ ESL Level 1 ☐ ESL Level 2 ☐ ESL Level 3 ☐ Exempted from ESL track

TEST ITEM	STIMULUS	DESIRED RESPONSE	SCORE A.C.	SCORE O.P.
1.	What's your name?	My name's _____.		
2.	Where were you born?	I was born in _____.		
3.	Where's the pencil?	It's on the desk/table.		
4.	Give me the pencil.	ACTION		
5.	(Picture) What's he going to do?	He's going to pick up the book.		
6.	(Paper) How many words have I written?	You've written three words.		
7.	Do you live near school?	Yes I do or No, I don't.		
8.	(Hold up dime) How much is this worth?	It's worth ten cents.		
9.	What can you get from a vending machine?	You can get _____.		
10.	What's my shirt/sweater made of?	It's made of _____.		
11.	What's this?	It's a driver's license.		
12.	Who does this belong to?	It belongs to Carlos Acosta.		
13.	Can you use a driver's license for identification?	Yes, you can.		
14.	What's shampoo used for?	It's used for washing your hair.		
15.	Ask me where I'm going to eat.	Where are you going to eat?		
		SCORE		

(Engage student in brief conversation using the following questions as possible points of departure.)

What's a hotel?

Where did you stay when you first came to this country?

What kinds of things are sold in a ten cent store?

Tell me about yourself.

COMPREHENSION	____	3. Understands everything at normal speed
	____	2. Understands fairly well at slower-than-normal speed with some repetition
	____	1. Understands only at slow speed with frequent repetitions
WORD-ORDER AND GRAMMAR	____	3. Few (if any) errors of grammar or word-order
	____	2. Meaning occasionally obscured by grammatical and/or word-order errors
	____	1. Errors of grammar and word-order make comprehension difficult
SPEED OF SPEECH	____	3. Speech speed that of a native speaker
	____	2. Speed of speech seems somewhat affected by language limitations
	____	1. Speed of speech is so far from normal as to make conversation difficult
TOTAL RATING	____	(9 possible points)

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(SECOND DRAFT)

ORAL PRODUCTION TEST

Level One

Student _____ Score:

Date _____ Aud. Comprehension /35

Tester _____ Oral Production /32

Teacher _____

TEST ITEM	STIMULUS		DESIRED RESPONSE	SCORE A.C.	SCORE O.P.
1.	_ _ _ _ _	Sit down.	ACTION		
2.	_ _ _ _ _	What's your name?	My name's _____.		
3.	(Insert student's native language)	Do you speak _____?	Yes, I do.		
4.	_ _ _ _ _	Where do you live?	I live in/at/on _____.		
5.	(Hold up your pen)	Is this my pen?	Yes, it is.		
6.	(Point to table)	What's this?	It's a/the table.		
7.	(Hold up number card)	What number is this?	It's seven.		
8.	(Hold up your notebook)	Whose notebook is this?	It's your notebook.		
9.	_ _ _ _ _	Where s the book?	It's on the table.		
10.	_ _ _ _ _	Pick up the book.	ACTION		
11.	_ _ _ _ _	What did you do?	I picked up the book.		
12.	_ _ _ _ _	Give me the book.	ACTION		
13.	_ _ _ _ _	What did you do?	I gave you the book.		
14.	_ _ _ _ _	Was the book on the table?	Yes, it was.		
15.	(Point to door/window)	Is the door/window open?	No, it isn't.		

TEST ITEM				SCORE A.C.	SCORE O.P.
	PICTURE A				
16.	(Point to sitting woman	Is she sitting on the chair?	Yes, she is.		
17.	"	What's she doing?	She's reading.		
18.	"	Does she have a pencil?	No, she doesn't.		
19.	"	What does she have?	She has a book.		
	PICTURE B				
20.	Point to man	Is he short?	No, he isn't.		
21.	"	Where's he going?	He's going to the window.		
22.	Point to the two men	Are they moving the chair?	No, they aren't.		
23.	"	What are they moving?	They're moving the table.		
	PICTURE C				
24.	Point to man	Did he open the door?	No, he didn't.		
25.	"	What did he open?	He opened the window.		
	PICTURE D				
26.	Point to man at desk	What is he going to do?	He's going to write in his notebook.		
27.	"	Why did he take out his pen?	Because _____.		

TEST ITEM				SCORE A.C.	SCORE O.P.
28.	Hold up time card #2	What time is it?	It's 10 after 4.		
29.	Point to calendar.	What's the date?	It's _____.		
30.	_ _ _ _ _	Are the books on the table?	Yes, they are.		
31.	_ _ _ _ _	What language do you speak?	I speak _____.		
32.	_ _ _ _ _	What language are you studying?	I'm studying English.		
33.	_ _ _ _ _	When were you born?	I was born in _____. (year)		
34.	_ _ _ _ _	How old are you?	I'm _____(years old).		
35.	(Insert something neither of you have	Do you and I have _____s?	No, we don't.		

TOTAL SCORE _____

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(SECOND DRAFT)

ORAL PRODUCTION TEST
LEVEL TWO

Student _____ Score: Aud. Comprehension /17

Date _____ Time _____ Mins. Oral Production /16

Tester _____ Teacher _____ Conversation /9

TEST ITEM	STIMULUS	DESIRED RESPONSE	SCORE A.C.	SCORE O.P.
1.	(Point to paper) How many words have I written?	You've written three words.		
2.	Do you live near school?	Yes, I do or No, I don't.		
3.	What time does your class begin?	It begins at _____.		
4.	Measure this book.	ACTION		
5.	How wide is it?	It's _____ inches wide.		
6.	What can you get in a supermarket?	You can get _____.		
7.	What's my shirt/sweater made of?	It's made of _____.		
8.	Where can you get your clothes washed?	You can get them washed at a laundry.		
	(Read to Student)			
	(Point to nickel)	This coin is called a nickel. It's worth five cents.		
	(Point to dime)	This one is called a dime. It's worth ten cents.		
9.	(Point to nickel) What's this coin called?	It's called a nickel.		
10.	(Point to dime) How much is this worth?	It's worth ten cents.		

TEST ITEM	STIMULUS	DESIRED RESPONSE	SCORE A.C.	SCORE O.P.
	(Read to Student) He's getting a coke. He's getting it from a vending machine. You can get candy and cigarettes from a machine. You need coins to use in vending machines.			
11.	Where's he getting the coke?	He's getting it from a vending machine.		
12.	What else can you get from a vending machine?	You can get candy, cigarettes.		
	(Read to Student) He's taken his cart to the checkout counter. The cashier is adding up his purchases. She's using a cash register. He'll pay the cashier for his purchases.			
13.	Where has he taken his cart?	He's taken it to the checkout counter.		
14.	Who will he pay for his purchases?	He'll pay the cashier.		
	(Read to Student) You can get your clothes washed at a laundry. It usually takes about a week. You can get it done faster. You usually have to pay extra for quick service.			
15.	Where can you get your clothes washed?	You can get them washed at a laundry.		
16.	How long does it take?	It usually takes about a week.		
17.	Do you have to pay extra for quick service?	Yes, (usually).		

(Engage student in conversation using the following questions as points of departure)

What kind of place do you live in?
Where did you stay when you first came to this country?
What's a hotel?

Where do you buy newspapers and books in your country?
Do you have laundromats in your country?
Can you get all your food at one store in your country?

COMPREHENSION	_____	3. Understands everything at normal speed
	_____	2. Understands fairly well at slower-than-normal speed with some repetition
	_____	1. Understands only at slow speed with frequent repetitions
WORD-ORDER AND GRAMMAR	_____	3. Few (if any) errors of grammar or word-order
	_____	2. Meaning occasionally obscured by grammatical and/or word-order errors
	_____	1. Errors of grammar and word-order make comprehension difficult
SPEED OF SPEECH	_____	3. Speech speed that of a native speaker
	_____	2. Speed of speech seems somewhat affected by language limitations
	_____	1. Speed of speech is so far from normal as to make conversation difficult
TOTAL RATING	_____	(9 possible points)

Bureau of Basic Continuing Education
New York State Education Department
Albany, New York

(FIRST DRAFT)

ORAL PRODUCTION TEST

Level Three

Student _____

Date _____

Tester _____

Teacher _____

Scores:

Aud. Comprehension	/13
Oral Production	/13
Asking Questions	/5
Conversation	/9

TEST ITEM	STIMULUS	DESIRED RESPONSE	SCORE A.C.	SCORE O.P.
	(Point to Picture A)			
1.	What's this?	It's a driver's license.		
2.	Who does it belong to?	It belongs to Carlos Acosta.		
3.	Whose picture is on the license?	Mr. Acosta's picture is on the license.		
4.	Can you use a driver's license for identification?	Yes, you can.		
5.	What's the number of the license?	It's 62-59-343.		
	(Point to Picture B)			
6.	What's he getting?	He's getting gasoline.		
7.	Where do you get gasoline?	You get gasoline at a gas station.		
8.	How do you ask for gasoline?	You ask for so many gallons/for so many dollars worth, etc.		
9.	What else can you get at a gas station?	You can get oil/water/tires at a gas station.		

TEST ITEM	STIMULUS	DESIRED RESPONSE	SCORE A.C.	SCORE O.P.
	(Point to Picture C)			
10.	What's he doing?	He's reading the newspaper		
11.	What's he looking at?	He's looking at the classified ads.		
12.	Are classified ads long or short?	They're short.		
13.	What do they advertise?	They advertise job openings/houses for sale or rent, etc.		
		SCORE		

ASKING QUESTIONS

1.	Ask me when I take aspirin.	When do you take aspirin?	
2.	Ask me what shampoo is used for.	What's shampoo used for?	
3.	Ask me where I'm going to eat.	Where are you going to eat?	
4.	Ask me if newspapers come out only in the morning.	Do newspapers come out only in the morning?	
5.	Ask me if cloth is measured by the yard.	Is cloth measured by the yard?	
		SCORE	

(Engage student in conversation using the following questions as points of departure)

Where do you eat lunch?
What do you eat for lunch?
What kinds of things are sold in a department store?
What do you use glue/paper clips/ rubber bands for?

COMPREHENSION	_____	3. Understands everything at normal speed
	_____	2. Understands fairly well at slower-than-normal speed with some repetition
	_____	1. Understands only at slow speed with frequent repetitions
WORD-ORDER AND GRAMMAR	_____	3. Few (if any) errors of grammar or word-order
	_____	2. Meaning occasionally obscured by grammatical and/or word-order errors
	_____	1. Errors of grammar and word-order make comprehension difficult
SPEED OR SPEECH	_____	3. Speech speed that of a native speaker
	_____	2. Speed of speech seems somewhat affected by language limitations
	_____	1. Speed of speech is so far from normal as to make conversation difficult
TOTAL RATING	_____	(9 possible points)

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